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RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000255

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DEPT FOR SA/INS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: RNA WORRIED THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO CONSENSUS ON HOW  
TO TACKLE INSURGENCY

REF: A. KATHMANDU 172

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 199

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Civilian Leadership Should Explain Counter-Insurgency Plan  
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[1](#)1. (C) On January 20, Lt. General Katawal, Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) Chief of General Staff, told the Ambassador he was worried that the government did not have a unified strategy for tackling the Maoist insurgency. Katawal reiterated that there was no purely military solution to the insurgency; the RNA could only work to create space for a negotiated political solution. He noted that the civilian government should lead the effort to inform its citizens about Nepal's overall plan to tackle the insurgency. Katawal stressed that a civilian government needed to explain to the people what the military was doing and why, especially why the government needed to restrict civil liberties.

[1](#)2. (C) Katawal explained that Home Minister Kamal Thapa had tried to work with the political parties on January 19 to avert the need for a day long curfew on January 20, the day Parties planned to hold mass demonstrations in Kathmandu. Katawal noted that the government had clear evidence that the Maoists intended to infiltrate the Parties' demonstration; the Maoists had already brought automatic weapons into the Kathmandu Valley, and had attacked police stations here (ref A). He pointed out that, during their rule, the Parties had placed restrictions on citizens for security reasons but now were unwilling to accept the need for such restrictions. The Ambassador agreed that Nepal needed a national consensus on how to address the insurgency. The Ambassador told Katawal that he had met with the Foreign Minister, Home Minister and Vice Chairman (ref B) to urge the government to postpone elections, reach out to the parties, and declare a cease-fire to create space for the legitimate democratic forces to discuss a counter-insurgency plan.

Parties Worried  
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[1](#)3. (C) Katawal asserted that the Maoists skillfully exploited the lack of government vision by using the political parties themselves to create tension among the legitimate democratic forces. Katawal admitted that the Maoists' strategy had been

"successful to an extent," but added that the political parties should soon see their mistake in aligning with the Maoists through the 12-point understanding. He noted the irony of the Parties linking with the Maoists: it was the Parties themselves who first labeled the Maoists as "terrorists" when the Parties were in power. Katawal believed the Parties had entered into the understanding with the Maoists to pressure the King and the RNA. He stressed that the RNA had no political aims, saying that the RNA would "obey any constitutional government." Katawal opined that the parties, especially the Nepali Congress party, were beginning to feel trapped, but acknowledged that it was "hard for the Parties to back down publicly." He added it was "time for the state to take steps so political parties could come to the negotiating table." Katawal hoped that the international community could urge the leaders of the political parties "to understand the gravity of the situation" and to understand that the RNA was not the enemy of democracy.

Comment

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14. (C) Nepal's monarchy and political parties have, over the past ten years, viewed the Maoist insurgency primarily as a chip to be played in their political games; at various times, each of the major Parties and the King have used the Maoists to advance their own interests vis-a-vis the other legitimate political actors. Thus, there has been no broad agreement on a counter-insurgency strategy. They have now reached the stage where, if the legitimate democratic forces do not stand together, there is a very real risk that the Maoists will succeed in their goal of a totalitarian state. Katawal's readiness to assure the Ambassador that the RNA had no political ambition might be an indication that some in the

military understand that the King must reach out to the political parties in order to ensure implementation of an effective counter-insurgency plan.

MORIARTY